United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ President of United States addressing opening meeting of General Assembly's general debate, says his country will work in partnership with other States but act unilaterally when its core interests are threatened; United States to pay outstanding peace-keeping dues in coming weeks.

+ President of Colombia says free trade is best contribution industrialized world can make to consolidate democracy and freedom in developing countries.

+ President of Mozambique thanks international community for help in successful conclusion of 1992 General Peace Agreement; cease-fire has held and national reconstruction is underway.

+ President of El Salvador says his country, freed from conflict between authoritarian stagnation and revolutionary radicalism, is striving to build structures of peace.

+ Crown Prince of Monaco, in commitment to environment, offers to host preparations for possible international year of seas and oceans.

+ Prime Minister of Japan says his country feels remorse for past actions and is resolved to make further contributions to the goals of world peace and prosperity.

+ Brazil's Minister of External Relations says democratic ideal should apply to composition of Security Council.

+ Morocco's Foreign Minister tells General Assembly that international agenda ignores economic interests of developing countries.

+ Egypt's Minister for Foreign Affairs says mutual recognition by Israel and PLO is major step towards just solution of Palestinian question.

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President Bill Clinton of the United States, addressing the General Assembly as it began its general debate this morning, said that the United States intended to remain engaged and to lead on the world stage. It would work in partnership with other States, but would act unilaterally when there was a threat to its core interests. He also pledged that the United States would be current on its peace-keeping bills within the next few weeks, but added that the basic assessment system should be changed so that other States could bear more of the financial burden.

President Clinton stressed the importance of non-proliferation, conflict resolution and sustainable development. Halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction -- nuclear, chemical and biological -- and the missiles that carried them was an urgent priority, as such weapons could turn a local conflict into a global human and environmental catastrophe. He called on all States to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention so that it might enter into force by 13 January 1995.

United Nations peace-keeping capabilities had not kept pace with the Organization's rising responsibilities, the President went on to say. Every proposed mission should be carefully analyzed and questions asked about cost and effectiveness. The United Nations could not become engaged in every conflict, he said. It must learn when to say "no", if the American people were to say "yes" to peace-keeping.

President Clinton expressed support for the Secretary-General's efforts to reform the United Nations, noting that corporations around the world were trying to improve service, reduce bureaucracy and cut costs. The Organization should establish an Office of Inspector General with a strong mandate to root out waste. He also stressed the importance and universal nature of human rights, and said a High Commissioner for Human Rights was needed.

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The President of Colombia, César Gaviria, today told the General Assembly that his nation had invested its hopes for development and well-being in free trade, as the best contribution the industrialized world could make to consolidate democracy and freedom in emerging countries. Colombia, he said, asked for free trade, not economic aid, and for open markets, not mere assistance.

From its inception, President Gaviria said, the United Nations had had the dual mission of maintaining international peace and security, and of promoting social and economic development for all people of the world. While there had been success in advancing collective global security, there had not been equivalent success in social welfare and economic development. He called on the international community to achieve an agenda for development. Only then, he said, could permanent peace be realized.

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In an address to the General Assembly, President Joaquim Alberto Chissano of Mozambique today thanked the international community for its help in the successful conclusion of the General Peace Agreement in Rome last October. Almost a year had elapsed without any major breach of the cease-fire and economic and social activities were reviving in Mozambique. Refugees were returning and resettling, infrastructure was being rebuilt, and foreigners were seeking investment opportunities in the country.

Sixteen years of war had caused some $20 billion worth of damage and had displaced some six million people in Mozambique, and humanitarian aid would be required for some years to come, President Chissano said. The success of the national reconstruction plan would depend in part on the generous support of the international community. He went on to say that the Mozambique National Resistence Movement (RENAMO) had been delaying implementation of the Peace Agreement, but pledged that his Government would spare no effort in making sure that multi-party elections were held in due time.

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Alfredo Félix Cristiani-Burkard, the President of El Salvador, today said his country was one of the first to benefit from the United Nations' new approach to peace-keeping. He told the General Assembly that El Salvador saw itself as setting an example, as a country that had broken out of the strait-jacket imposed by the conflict between authoritarian stagnation and revolutionary radicalism. Now it needed technical and economic support to swiftly build the structures of peace, and to wipe away the discouraging memory that it was easier to find financing for war than for peace.

With his presidential mandate ending in June 1994, this was the last time he would be addressing the General Assembly, Mr. Cristiani-Burkard said. On behalf of El Salvador, he thanked the United Nations, the Security Council, the former and current Secretaries-General and all others who had helped the country place itself on the road to peace.

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The Government of Monaco had set itself the priority of protecting both its cultural and natural environment, Crown Prince Albert of Monaco told the General Assembly this afternoon, in his country's first participation in the Assembly since its recent admission as a Member State. Speaking on behalf of his father, Prince Rainier III, he said the Principality had undertaken major efforts with respect to the environment, particularly to combat all forms of pollution which menaced and contaminated the Mediterranean.

Monaco encouraged the creation of institutions on its territory to prepare for the adoption of a resolution by the Assembly making 1998 the international year of the seas and oceans, the Crown Prince continued. Though it had neither armed forces nor military arsenals, Monaco was fully prepared to assist all actions undertaken by the United Nations to maintain and rebuild peace.

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Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa of Japan today told the General Assembly that he had come to the United Nation on his first official visit abroad because the Organization had a crucial role to play in the maintenance of peace and security. He also wanted to convey personally Japan's determination to contribute both financially and in terms of personnel to various United Nations efforts. He stressed that his country felt a sense of remorse over its past actions and was firmly resolved to make further contributions to the goals of world peace and prosperity.

The rapid exansion of peace-keeping operations had made it increasingly difficult for the United Nations to meet its financial needs promptly, the Prime Minister said. Without adequate financial resources, the Organization would be powerless to engage in any activity, no matter how meaningful it might be. It was important for all Member States to fulfill their obligations to the United Nations. He expressed concern over allegations of inefficiency and wastefulness in the Organization and said better financial discipline and budgetary control were needed.

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Brazil's Minister of External Relations, Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim, told the General Assembly today that with the virtual elimination of the last remnants of colonialism, the international agenda now centred on democracy, development and disarmament. The democratic ideal was as applicable in international relations as it was in domestic politics, and there was a need to update the composition of the Security Council. The Council had a growing role in matters affecting Member States and a more representative composition would enhance its legitimacy and efficiency.

Brazil vigorously supported the idea of an agenda for development and attached great importance to the Commission on Sustainable Development, Mr. Amorin said. The commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was held last year in Rio de Janeiro, must be put into effect. He went on to say that the Brazilian Government was strengthening its presence in the Amazon in order to protect indigenous populations and the environment, both of which were frequently exposed to predatory activities.

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Abdellatif Filali, Morocco's Minister for Foreign Affairs, today told the General Assembly that while the United Nations had a vital role, its effectiveness was limited by the "inadaption" of its Charter and by a lack of financial resources. He also said that the economic interests of the developing world were not mentioned in the international agenda. Morocco firmly believed in the universal character and comprehensive nature of human rights. However, the concept of human rights should be attuned to the values,

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culture, traditions and levels of development of different countries. The political aspect of human rights should not prevail over the social and economic dimensions, which covered such basic needs as food, health care and shelter.

Mr. Filali warned that efforts to maintain international peace and security and settle disputes would be futile as long as the socio-economic imbalances between developed and developing countries continued to increase daily. Rich countries should open their markets, increase their investments in developing countries, alleviate debt burdens and increase technology transfers, he said, noting that the economic and social situation in the Southern Hemisphere could threaten security, stability and development in the north.

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Egypt's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amre Moussa, today told the General Assembly that mutual recognition by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was a major step towards a just solution of the Palestinian question, which had cast a shadow on the Middle East and the world as a whole. He called on the peoples of the region to develop a system of relations based on equal security, the non-use of force and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. He also called on all States in the Middle East, particularly Israel, to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to renounce the possession, use or threat of use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Mr. Moussa went on to say that developments in the Horn of Africa affected the security of the Middle East and Africa in General. He welcomed the independence of Eritrea and its membership of the United Nations and expressed support for Somalia's hopes for a secure future and national reconciliation. The people of Somalia should be free to express their will without being blackmailed by power-seekers who instigated policies of destruction and annihilation, he said.

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